

Purpose and Need

Clover to Schell Pipeline Extension

Tonto Basin Ranger District

Date: 10/01/2019

ID Team Leader: Matt Kilford, Eric Hoskins

Project Name: Clover to Schell Pipeline Extension

Project type: Structural Range Improvement

Target start date: 05/06/2021

Target finish date: 09/01/2021

Expected NEPA Documentation Type: Categorical Exclusion (DM required)

If Categorical Exclusion, select Category: 32.2 (9) Implement or modify minor management practices for range allotment when no allotment mgmt plan

Project location: The Clover to Schell Pipeline project is located on Armer and Dutchwomen Grazing Allotments on Tonto Basin Ranger District. The project is located near F.S. road 3693 and south on F.S. 663 road. The legal location of the project is Township 4N, Range 13E, and Section 8.

Vegetation type: Sonoran Desert Scrub

Existing Condition

The Armer Mountain Grazing Allotment on Tonto Basin Ranger District of Tonto National Forest has for the last couple years had a Bald Eagle nesting in the Schell/Middle pasture. The eagle nest is located in a cottonwood tree located near a set of livestock corrals (a main water for this pasture). Although cattle can graze this area without disturbing the eagle nest there is a need to check the water and to move livestock throughout the pasture. In order to help facilitate livestock management while taking into consideration the eagle concerns, new water locations are desired to help alleviate concerns in this area and focus on the west side of the pasture in the uplands. This pasture is located in Management area 6J which manages for a variety of renewable natural resources with one of the primary emphasis on livestock forage production.

Desired Conditions

As described in the Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan on replacement page 42. Standards and guidelines state that a minimum of four waters per section and one water per section in big game key areas should be provided. In management area 6J livestock should be managed at Level D. Level D management for livestock includes:

Management seeks to optimize production and utilization of forage allocated for livestock use consistent with maintaining the environment and providing the multiple use of the range.

From all existing range and livestock management technology, practices may be selected and used to develop cost effective methods for achieving improved forage supplies and uniform livestock distribution and forage use... Cultural practices may be combined with fencing and water developments to implement complex grazing systems and management methods.

The Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan states that rangeland in less than satisfactory condition will be treated with improved grazing management along with the installation of structural and non-structural improvements (pg 195). Also to develop structural improvements in association with AMP's to maintain utilization at levels appropriate with management intensity and AMP objectives.

Current Management Direction

The Armer Mountain Allotment has an active term grazing permit that authorizes a deferred rest rotation through approximately 8 pastures. In the middle of these pastures is the Schell/Middle pasture that cattle would need to be moved through to get from the Roosevelt Lake Pasture up through the upper pastures on Thompson Mesa. Currently the main source of water and the corrals in this pasture is located below an active eagle nest making management and movement of livestock through this pasture difficult when trying not to disturb the eagle to comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Lacey Act. Recently they have also added additional water source of the A-Cross road to help aid in distribution away from the eagles nest.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to add additional water sources to the Schell/Middle pasture so that we can use the water to control the distribution of cattle including turning off the water at the corrals where the eagle is located at so cattle will relocate on a new water source where they can be managed. This would also provide livestock and wildlife with additional reliable water sources in west side of the pasture where permanent water is lacking. The need is to comply with direction found in the Tonto National Land and Resource Management Plan and to move the allotment towards our desired conditions.

Proposed Action

It's proposed to install a 1 inch to 1.25 inch HDPE pipeline above ground from the existing water source (pipeline) in Clover Pasture to 3 new drinkers located at approximate points (see map) in Schell Pasture.

Design Features

The pipeline will be laid above ground and just off of the roadway to conceal it from the casual observer for the majority of the stretch. The troughs will be leveled before placement. The troughs will also be required to have a usable escape ramp and a functioning float.

Implementation Timeline:

Initial Scoping should be completed by November 30th, 2019 and implementation is expected to begin by May 7, 2021.

Please send your questions, concerns, or mitigations to:

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